Discovery of new Gas Hydrate

*38. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have discovered huge quantity of "Gas Hydrate" at Krishna and Godavari basin in Bay of Bengal, recently;

(b) if so, the expected quantity of the same and how it shall be utilized particularly natural gas and L.P.G.; and

(c) at what position is the progress to convert this gas into natural gas and L.P.G.?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) Gas hydrate deposits have been found in the Krishna-Godavari offshore basin in one of the wells drilled/cored by the hired drillship "Joides Resolution" in a recent drilling/coring programme for finding gas hydrates in Indian waters.

(b) and (c) Internationally, all exploration programmes for gas hydrates are still at Research & Development stage. Gas from the gas hydrates is primarily methane gas. Feasible production technologies for extracting natural gas from gas hydrates on a commercial scale are yet to be developed any where. India is also pursuing R & D in gas hydrates.

Rise in inflation rate

*39. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRIAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether inflation rate in the country during the current fiscal has been higher as compared to that of during the last three years;

(b) if so, the inflation rate during each of the last three years, month wise;

(c) whether steep increase has been registered in the prices of daily food items and fuels during the current fiscal;

(d) if so, the extent of increase registered in the prices of said commodities with the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken/being taken by Government to bring down the inflation rate and to check the price rise of essential commodities?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Average rate of inflation in the country in the current year (April—June) has been lower than that during the corresponding period of each of the last three years.

(b) to (e) The average monthly and annual rate of inflation (WPI based) from April 2003 to June 2006 for food items, fuel and all commodities is given in Table 1 below. The average rate of inflation for the period April-June for the years 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 is also shown. In the current year, there has been pressure on prices of some food grains and of petrol and diesel. Increase in prices of food articles has largely been due to a shortfall in domestic supplies relative to demand and hardening of international prices. Government has already taken steps to arrest the price increase by augmenting supplies through imports at reduced duty rates, ban on export of pulses and sugar, regular monitoring of prices of essential commodities and regulatory meaures for restricting speculative trading in future market.

Table 1: Average Inflation rates of WPI vis-a-vis major groups during 2006-07 Compared to last three years (%)

WPI	All comm	Food group	Fuel group	All comm	Food group	Fuel group	All comm	Food group	Fuel group	All comm	Food group	Fuel group
Weight	100.0	26.9	14..2	100.0	26.9	14..2	100.0	26.9	14.2	100.0	26.9	14..2
Month	2003-04			2004-05			2005-06			2006-07		
Apr.	6.7	4.6	10.3	4.5	3.4	3.6	5.9	2.4	11.2	3.9	3.5	8.2
May	6.5	5.7	7.5	5.0	3.6	6.7	5.5	1.4	10.9	4.4	4.6	9.1
Jun	5.3	5.3	5.3	6.7	2.3	9.7	4.3	2.0	10.5	5.1	5.9	8.9
Jul.	4.7	4.0	4.6	7.6	3.6	10.3	4.3	3.6	10.7			
Aug.	3.9	1.8	4.9	8.5	5.3	12.1	3.7	2.8	8.8			
Sep.	4.9	3.2	6.6	7.9	4.9	10.7	4.1	2.3	11.0			
Oct.	5.1	5.0	5.4	7.3	3.6	11.0	4.7	3.0	11.0			
Nov.	5.4	4.0	6.0	7.5	4.1	13.9	4.2	4.5	7.4			
Dec.	5.7	4.5	7.7	6.8	3.7	12.3	4.4	4.9	7.7			
Jan.	6.5	5.0	8.2	5.5	3.2	10.1	4.1	4.7	7.9			
Feb.	6.1	4.4	7.3	5.0	2.3	10.5	4.0	4.4	8.5			
Mar.	4.8	3.6	3.3	5.4	3.0	10.4	3.9	3.5	8.9			
Average												
Apr.-Mar.	5.5	4.3	6.4	6.5	3.6	10.1	4.4	3.3	9.5	—	—	—
Apr.-Jun.	6.2	5.2	7.7	5.4	3.1	6.7	5.3	2.0	10.9	4.5	4.7	8.8